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CreatorSEO Links Process Guide

Updated: May 2010

Introduction

This guide has been developed by CreatorSEO to help our clients manage their SEO campaigns. This guide will be updated regularly as the Search Engines amend the criteria for organic search rankings/change their algorithms.

L10 **LINKS: CONTACTING**

Review your competitor(s) websites and detail all their core terms

L1 **LINK BUILDING STRATEGY**
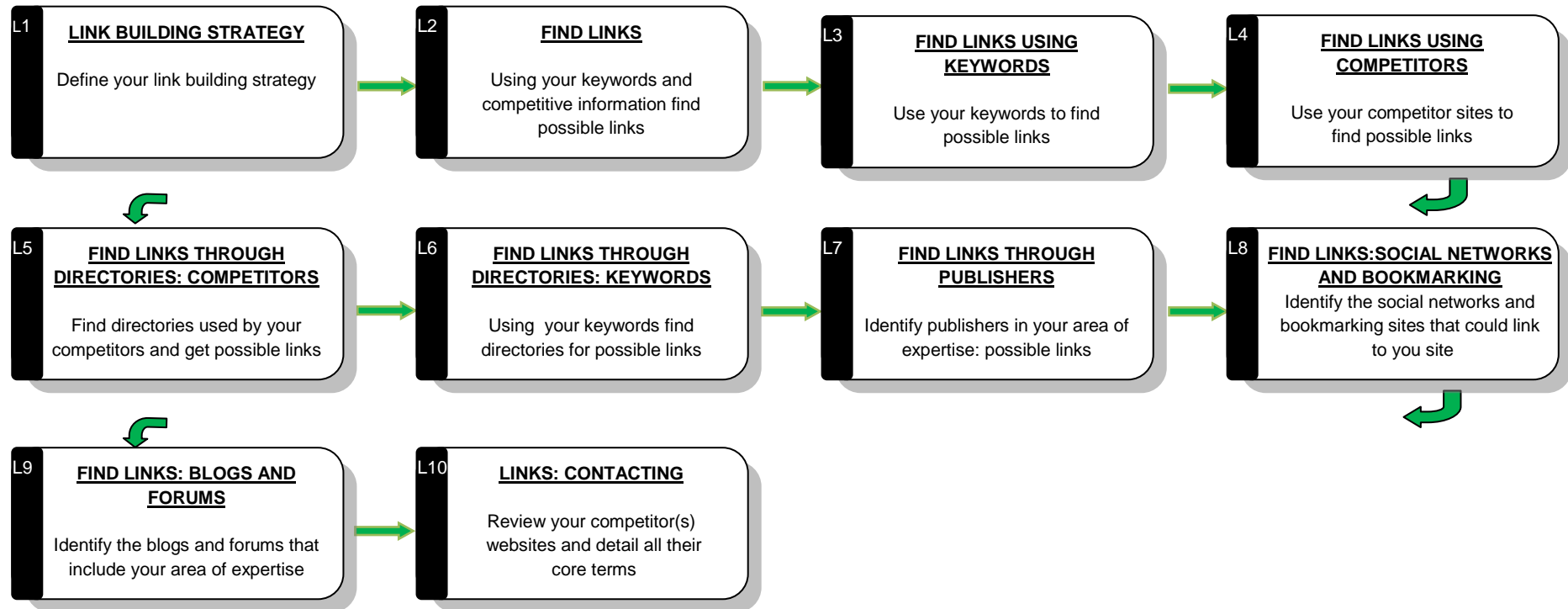
Define your link building strategy

Right Links + On Page optimization

= Higher Rankings

= More Traffic

= More Sales

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The SEO Link Process

L1 LINK BUILDING STRATEGY

Define your link building strategy

L2 FIND LINKS

Using your keywords and competitive information find possible links

L3 FIND LINKS USING KEYWORDS

Use your keywords to find possible links

L4 FIND LINKS USING COMPETITORS

Use your competitor sites to find possible links

L5 FIND LINKS THROUGH DIRECTORIES: COMPETITORS

Find directories used by your competitors and get possible links

L6 FIND LINKS THROUGH DIRECTORIES: KEYWORDS

Using your keywords find directories for possible links

L7 FIND LINKS THROUGH PUBLISHERS

Identify publishers in your area of expertise: possible links

L8 FIND LINKS:SOCIAL NETWORKS AND BOOKMARKING

Identify the social networks and bookmarking sites that could link to you site

L9 FIND LINKS: BLOGS AND FORUMS

Identify the blogs and forums that include your area of expertise

L10 LINKS: CONTACTING

Review your competitor(s) websites and detail all their core terms

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Definitions

Backlink	Very important for internet marketing / search engine optimization (SEO). Also known as a back link, backward link, or inbound link. Backlinks are all of the links from other sites that direct users to your site. Backlinks can significantly improve your site's search rankings, particularly when they contain anchor text keywords relevant to your site.
Link	Very important for internet marketing / search engine optimization (SEO). Also known as a HTML link. A hyperlink is an image or portion of text that when clicked transfers you to another location either within/outside of the site.
Inbound Link	Key for internet marketing / search engine optimization (SEO). Also known as backlink, backward link or backlinks. Inbound links are all of the links on other websites that direct traffic to your site. Inbound links can improve your site's search rankings, particularly if they contain anchor text keywords relevant to your site.
Landing Page	Very important for internet marketing / search engine optimization (SEO). The landing page is the page that a visitor "lands" on after selecting a search engine listing, link, banner ad and so on. The landing page may or not be the site's homepage. Well designed landing pages will improve conversion rates.
Link Baiting	Link baiting is the use of content that entices visitors to link to your page from another website.
Link Building	Very important for internet marketing / search engine optimization (SEO). This is the process of building high quality linkage data. The aim is to get the search engines to trust that your website is authoritative, relevant, and trustworthy.
Link Exchange	Important for internet marketing/ search engine optimization (SEO). A link exchange is the reciprocal link exchange between two sites.
Link Farm	A link farm is a webpage or group of webpages that exist solely to increase the number of backlinks to a site. A link farms is also considered a form of Spam and sites that rely on them are penalized by search engines, i.e. this can negatively affect your SEO.
Link Popularity	Link popularity is the measure of how popular a webpage is. The quantity and quality of the backlinks are taken into account by the search engines. Most search engines use link popularity as a factor in their algorithms.
Link Spamming	Negatively effects your search engine optimization (SEO). Having irrelevant links to and from your site.
Link Text	Very important for internet marketing / search engine optimization (SEO). Some people use the term 'click here' or have an image without Alt text. It is important for SEO to ensure that you have appropriate text for link including images with links (Alt text).
Page Rank	Internet marketing / search engine optimization (SEO) metric. Page Rank is an analysis algorithm developed by Google that rates a page based on its importance and content.

The importance of Inbound Links

Building inbound links to your site is a critical part of SEO. These links not only drive traffic to your site but are also seen by the search engines as a key criteria in identifying authority sites. Link building is about getting other websites to point to your site. These links are called backlinks or inbound links to your site.

Link building helps:

1. Your website get indexed well by the search engines
2. Drive traffic to your site (potential customers) and
3. Increases your page rank and therefore your SEO (rankings on the search engines)

What are links?
Links connect the web together. Links helps visitors navigate from page to page or from one site to another. Links can come from many sources: directories, suppliers, interested parties in your content and so on.

Why do people link websites?
Sites link to other websites usually when they feel that information on the other site might be valuable to their customers. If many sites are linking to a particular site/page, it's a strong indication of good content and/or a good authority (an SEO goal). The search engines view links as "votes of confidence". In recent years, the importance of backlinks has continued to grow. The search engines put a great deal of emphasis on inbound links when making ranking decisions. If there are two pages with identical or equally relevant content, headers, Meta, and so on; the page with the better backlinks will rank higher.

How do Search Engines recognize links?
In theory, each link to a web page is seen as a vote for that web page. A lot of webmasters spend time getting as many links as possible and forget that votes do not have equal weighting. Obviously the number of links that you have has a big impact on your SEO. When evaluating your site links, the search engines take into account:

1. Are they relevant? and
2. Are they an authority?

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Relevance

A link coming from a site that is on the same or very similar topic is worth more than a link coming from a site with unrelated content. Remember the link text to your site is very important (try to discourage people from using 'click here'), it should describe the link!

Authority

Search engines attempt to measure if a website is a 'trusted site'. If a site is highly trusted, its vote will count for more than if it is not as trusted. The more authority links that a site has the more it is trusted.

Link acquisition remains a key part of SEO and will continue to play a significant role in search engine rankings for the foreseeable future.

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There are many places/ways to get other sites to link to your website:

Ask for a Link	Start by asking your suppliers, customers and so on for a link to your site. You may know or come across sites that would be good to link to your site: ask for a link!
Article Marketing, Give away content or tools	Write articles for the web (on-line magazines, customer sites and so on). You write the article with content that is related to your site and make sure to give your link (you web address/landing page) in the article or field provided. If people read your article and like the content, this should drive traffic to your site.
	You can also make content or tools available for other sites to use as long as they give you a Backlink and reference your site.
Blogs and Forums	You can create blogs (many are free) with content related to your site. You must ensure that you put your website address (link) in to the blog which results in a Backlink to your site. You can also comment on other peoples blogs and again make sure that you get your website link in each comment/blog that you post.
	In forums you post your own thread or reply to somebody else's thread. You again make sure that you include your web address.
Purchasing Links	There are many organisations that will allow you to purchase links to certain sites. These sites are usually directories and are usually not relevant in terms of content: they usually have a low page rank. It must also be noted that Search Engines frown upon sites that purchase links and this can have a negative impact on your SEO.
Social Networking/ Bookmarking	Social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and so on, usually have a facility to add you web address.
	Social bookmarking is a facility for Internet users to store, organize and manage bookmarks of web pages they use/like, these include www.digg.com, www.delicious.com, www.stumbleupon.com, www.squidoo.com, www.diigo.com and so on. These sites all help in creating backlinks to your site.
Website Directories	These are directories for the world-wide web. A web directory also called a link directory that specializes in the categorization of other sites. You can submit your site for a Backlink from these directories. Many are free, most of the directories with higher page rank charge for the service.

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The process of link building

Getting other sites to link to your site is critical for your SEO. Sounds simple, so what do you need to do? Follow this process for a guide to getting the right links to your site and beat your competition.

Remember getting high rankings on the search engines is all about knowing what your competitors are doing and then for you to do better!

	Process step	Explanation
Link Building Strategy	**L1** **LINK BUILDING STRATEGY** Define your link building strategy **Creator SEO Tool** **Link Popularity**	**L1** When you define your link building campaign you need to focus on getting links from: 1. Authoritative sites 2. Non home pages (deep links) 3. Sites in the same geographical area (helps local rankings) 4. As many different sites as possible Each of these components will be discussed in more detail. For the major search engines, you can see which sites link to yours using the Creator SEO Tool 'Link Popularity'.

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| Find Links | **L2** **FIND LINKS** Using your keywords and competitive information find possible links **Creator SEO Tool** **Link Finder** | **L2** You can find possible links from many different sources, these include: • Find high ranked sites using similar keywords to you • Find high ranked sites from your competitors • Find directories used by your competitors • Find directories using similar keywords • Find high ranked sites that publish articles in your area of expertise • Find social networking/bookmarking sites to link to your website • Find the blogs and forums that are applicable to your area of expertise Each of these is a separate process for identifying possible sites to link to. Each one of these steps will be discussed below. |

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L3

FIND LINKS USING KEYWORDS

Use your keywords to find possible links

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Link Finder

Find Links: Using Keywords

L3 You can find possible links from your keywords. Choose the keywords/phrases that you want to search on and the applicable search engines. You want to get the top ranked sites for the applicable search engines that use the keyword/phrase specified.

Make sure that you use key phrases that are quite broad. If you make the key phrase too focused you will minimise the number of possible link opportunities. For example use the phrase "Car Insurance" rather than a too focused phrase such as "Car Insurance New York USA". The broader the phrase the more possible link opportunities.

Once you have these websites you can sort these by Page Rank and Alexa Rank.

URL/ Web page address		Search Engine	Link Type	Relevant Keywords	Page Rank	Alexa Rank
Keyword/phrases 1						
www. seo . com		Google	Ask Link	Car Insurance	1	15,000
www. seo tools . co.uk		Google	Ask Link	Car Insurance	2	4,900
www. seo . com		Bing	Ask Link	Car Insurance	2	29,000
Keyword/phrases 2						
www. seo . com		Google	Ask Link	Motor Insurance	4	43,200
www. seo tools . com		Yahoo	Ask Link	Motor Insurance	3	28,150
Keyword/phrases 3						
www. seo . ie		Google	Ask Link	Insurance	4	46,320
www. seo tools . com		Bing	Ask Link	Insurance	1	1,500

You can get the contact information for each of these sites from the whois database servers. You can contact these sites through e-mail, phone etc. For key sites that you would like a link from, it is worthwhile contacting the link manager (face-to-face is ideal) and convincing him/her that your site is worth linking to. An e-mail link request sample is detailed later in the process.

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Find Links: Using Competitors

L4

FIND LINKS USING COMPETITORS

Use your competitor sites to find possible links

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Competitor Links

L4 You can find possible links from your competitor's sites. Choose the competitors that you want to search on and the applicable search engines. You want to get the top ranked sites for the applicable search engines that these competitors use.

Your aim is to get the sites that link to your competitors to also link to your site.

Once you have these websites you can sort these by Page Rank and Alexa Rank.

URL/ Web page address		Search Engine	Link Type	Relevant Keywords	Page Rank	Alexa Rank
Competitor 1						
www. seo . com		Google	Ask Link	Car Insurance	1	15,000
www. seo tools . com		Yahoo	Ask Link	Motor Insurance	3	28,150
www. seo . com		Bing	Ask Link	Car Insurance	2	29,000
Competitor 2						
www. seo . com		Google	Ask Link	Motor Insurance	4	43,200
www. seo tools .uk		Google	Ask Link	Car Insurance	2	4,900
Competitor 3						
www. seo . ie		Google	Ask Link	Insurance	4	46,320
www. seo .com		Bing	Ask Link	Insurance	1	1,500

You can get the contact information for each of these sites from the whois database servers.

You can contact these sites through e-mail, phone etc. For key sites that you would like a link from, it is worthwhile contacting the link manager (face-to-face is ideal) and convincing him/her that your site is worth linking to. An e-mail link request sample is detailed later in the process.

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Find Links: Directories used by your Competitors

L5

FIND LINKS THROUGH DIRECTORIES: COMPETITORS

Find directories used by your competitors and get possible links

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Competitor Links

L5 You can find possible links from directories that your competitors use. Directories can be local to a particular area and can be a way to interface with the local market(s). Choose the competitors that you want to search on and the applicable search engines. You want to get the top ranked sites for the applicable directories that these competitors use.

Your aim is to get the directories that link to your competitors to also link to your site.

Once you have these websites you can sort these by Page Rank and Alexa Rank.

URL/ Web page address		Search Engine	Link Type	Relevant Keywords	Page Rank	Alexa Rank
Directory 1						
www. seo . com		Google	Directory	Car Insurance	1	15,000
www. seo tools . dl		Yahoo	Directory	Car Insurance	3	28,150
www. seo . au		Bing	Directory	Car Insurance	2	29,000
www. seo tools , fl		Bing	Directory	Insurance	1	1,500
www. seo . nw		Google	Directory	Motor Insurance	4	46,320
Directory 2						
www. seo tools . ab		Google	Directory	Motor Insurance	4	43,200
www. seo tools . se		Google	Directory	Car Insurance	2	4,900

You can get the contact information for each of these sites from the whois database servers.

Directories can provide a rapid way to get new links to your site. A lot of directory sites charge for their services, it is believed that the search engines take account of how reputable the directory is when awarding PR points. Make sure the directory you want a link from has a submission policy that states that you are paying for an editor to review your listing and not just to get the listing (Yahoo). Also a good directory site enforces its policies and this is evident.
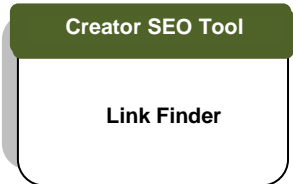
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L6

FIND LINKS THROUGH DIRECTORIES: KEYWORDS

Using your keywords find directories for possible links

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Link Finder

Find Links: Directories that use your Keywords

L6 You can find possible links from directories using your keywords. Directories can be searched to see if they focus on any particular areas of interest. In the example we are using, you could have directories in local areas for the Insurance companies. It must be noted that directories which focus on a particular service or product range tend to charge to join their directory. Again you want to get the top ranked sites for the applicable directories that use your keywords/phrases.

Your aim is to get the directories that use your keywords/phrases to also link to your site.

Once you have these websites you can sort these by Page Rank and Alexa Rank.

URL/ Web page address		Search Engine	Link Type	Relevant Keywords	Page Rank	Alexa Rank
Directory 5						
www. seo . au		Bing	Directory	Car Insurance	2	29,000
www. seo tools .fl		Bing	Directory	Insurance	1	1,500
www. seo . nw		Google	Directory	Motor Insurance	4	46,320
Directory 112						
www. seo . ab		Google	Directory	Motor Insurance	4	43,200
www. seo tools . se		Google	Directory	Car Insurance	2	4,900
www. seo tools . com		Google	Directory	Car Insurance	1	15,000
www. seo . dl		Yahoo	Directory	Car Insurance	3	28,150

You can get the contact information for each of these sites from the whois database servers.

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Find Links: Publishers in your area of Expertise

L7 **FIND LINKS THROUGH PUBLISHERS**

Identify publishers in your area of expertise: possible links

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Link Finder

L7 You can find possible links from publishers who distribute in your area of expertise. The best way of getting a link from these publishers is to write an article or have some good content that the publisher may be interested in having on their site. Publishers need a good reason to provide links to another site, and it is not something they do readily. Having superior content is the key to obtaining these links.

Have a piece of content or an article, then identify all the possible publishers (on-line and paper) who might be interested in this. You want to get the top ranked sites for the applicable area. Your aim is to get your article published, credited to you and also a link to your site.

Once you have these publishers websites you can sort these by Page Rank and Alexa Rank.

URL/ Web page address		Search Engine	Link Type	Relevant Keywords	Page Rank	Alexa Rank
Article 99						
www. seo . nu		n/a	Ask Article	Car Insurance	2	29,000
www. seo tools . ff		n/a	Ask Article	Insurance	1	1,500
www. seo tools . kk		n/a	Ask Article	Motor Insurance	4	46,320

You can get the contact information for each of these sites from the whois database servers.

When you are submitting an article for publication to another site, it is worth rewriting some or all of the content and maybe altering the structure of the article. The search engines are looking for original content and duplicating an article may not give you the link points that you want.

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L8 FIND LINKS:SOCIAL NETWORKS AND BOOKMARKING
Identify the social networks and bookmarking sites that could link to you site

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Link Finder

Find Links: Social Networking/ Bookmarking

L8 You can get links from social network sites and bookmarking sites. The only way of getting a link from these sites is to join them. On joining most of these sites there is usually an area to add your website.

Also on some of these sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn), you might find that there are forums or blogs on your area of expertise. Adding content to these forums or blogs can help with these links; not all sites will automatically give you a link. You want to get the top ranked sites that could give you backlinks.

Once you have these sites you can sort these by Page Rank and Alexa Rank.

URL/ Web page address		Search Engine	Link Type	Relevant Keywords	Page Rank	Alexa Rank
Social Networking						
www. seo . aa		n/a	Social	Car Insurance	2	14,500
www. seo tools .bb		n/a	Social	Insurance	1	1,500
www. seo . cc		n/a	Social	Motor Insurance	4	46,320
Bookmarking						
www. seo . dd		n/a	Social	Car Insurance	2	29,000
www. seo tools .ee		n/a	Social	Insurance	1	1,500
www. seo tools . ff		n/a	Social	Insurance	4	16,520

You can get the contact information for each of these sites from the whois database servers.

Social Networking and Bookmarking sites can bring a lot of traffic and links to your site. The key here is to try and get good quality traffic that convert.

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Find Links: Blogs and Forums	**L9** **FIND LINKS: BLOGS AND FORUMS** Identify the blogs and forums that include your area of expertise **Creator SEO Tool** **Link Finder**

L9 You can get links from blogs and forums. You usually have to join a blog or forum before you can either add a new entry or contribute to an existing one. This is a great way of letting people know about your services, gaining credibility and of course backlinks.. You want to get the top ranked sites that could give you backlinks..

Once you have these sites you can sort these by Page Rank and Alexa Rank.

URL/ Web page address		Search Engine	Link Type	Relevant Keywords	Page Rank	Alexa Rank
			Blog			
www. seo . jj		n/a	Blogs/Forums	Car Insurance	2	18,500
www. seo tools .ii		n/a	Blogs/Forums	Insurance	1	6,500
			Forum			
www. seo tools .pp		n/a	Blogs/Forums	Car Insurance	2	27,700

You can get the contact information for each of these sites from the whois database servers.

Blogging can be effective in link development, demonstrating your capabilities and enhancing your reputation.

SEO Links Process Steps

L10

LINKS: CONTACTING

Review your competitor(s) websites and detail all their core terms

Links, contacting

L10 Generating good links is hard work. You need to systematically go through each grouping of possible links and take the appropriate action.

It is recommended that you combine your spreadsheets:

URL/ Web page address		Search Engine	Link Type	Relevant Keywords	Page Rank	Alexa Rank
Ask: Email Campaign: Add Link						
www. seo . com		Google	Ask Link	Car Insurance	1	15,000
www. seo tools . co.uk		Google	Ask Link	Motor Insurance	2	4,900
www. seo . com		Bing	Ask Link	Car Insurance	2	29,000
Ask: Email Campaign: Add Article						
www. seo tools . cn		Google	Ask Article	Car Insurance	3	27,750
www. seo tools . dl		Bing	Ask Article	Insurance	1	12,300
www. seo . es		Bing	Ask Article	Insurance	3	2,050
Directories						
www. seo . com		Google	Directory	Motor Insurance	4	43,200
www. seo tools . com		Yahoo	Directory	Motor Insurance	3	28,150
Social Networking/ Bookmarking						
www. seo . de		Google	Social	Insurance	4	45,400
www. seo tools .fr		Yahoo	Social	Car Insurance	4	43,200
Blogs/Forums						
www. seo tools . ie		Google	Blogs/Forums	Insurance	4	46,320
www. seo tools . com		Bing	Blogs/Forums	Insurance	1	1,500

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		When you are asking for a link exchange; we have found that if you have already set-up the link from your site, it makes it easier for someone to reciprocate (higher success rate). It is recommended that you try to personalise each note/mail to the organisation you are trying to link with. As possible note could be: Hi XXXX, My name is SEO Tools, SEO Marketing Consultant. I've greatly enjoyed looking through your site www. seo.com and I was wondering if you would be interested in exchanging links with my website. I would like to offer you a link back from : http://www.creatorseo.com/ with page rank x We are a high ranking SEO tools provider. If you are interested, can you please send me the following details of your site: Title: URL: Description: I will add your link as soon as possible, in the next 24 hours. As soon as it's ready, I'll send you a confirmation email along with the information (Title, URL and Description) regarding my site to be placed at yours. Thank you for your time. Kindest regards, John Caldwell SEO Tools, CreatorSEO

When writing your link request mail, follow these guidelines:

1. **Keep it simple and to the point.**
   - Your mail is probably unsolicited, you have 6 to 8 seconds to get their attention: keep your mail concise, simple and to the point.

2. **Get your message across.**
   - Make sure the reader knows exactly what you are looking for.

3. **Benefits of the link.**
   - Point out the reasons why they should put a link to your site.

4. **Follow the SPAM guidelines for your jurisdiction.**
   - Different countries have different guidelines for SPAM: make sure you are not breaching these.

For high ranking sites that you would like a backlink from: phone calls may also be used in pursuit of these. You also may decide to write content just to support these campaigns. Also if this is particularly important to you and if appropriate a face-to-face meeting should be arranged.